

Cabot Working Group Update
October 31, 2014
Submitted by Ald. Susan Albright

The active feasibility study phase of designing the Cabot School is just beginning. We have our Owner's Project Manager (Joslin Lesser) and design team (DiNisco Design Partnership) on board. Alex Valcarce from Newton's Public Building department will be our project manager. This is the same team that is working productively on Angier. Susan Albright will be the Aldermanic representative on the Working Group with Emily Norton and Ruthanne Fuller joining her on the Cabot School Building Committee.

Please know that the enrollment for Cabot has already been set. It is done in conjunction with the MSBA very early in the process so that the site selection, size of the building, and number of classrooms and outdoor space is appropriate.

In November 2013, the City of Newton was invited into the eligibility period with the MSBA. In February 2014, the School Department had to submit a preliminary enrollment and baseline projection to the MSBA. It included information on enrollment, births, building permits and projected permits (for single and multi and active or planned residential developments), and housing sales. It also included the School District's recommendation of 480 for the design enrollment.

On March 3, 2014, the MSBA notified the City of its recommendation for the design enrollment for Cabot. The MSBA performed an independent capacity analysis. It saw a "need for the Cabot Elementary School project to allow for an expansion over the school's current enrollment to relieve enrollment pressures at other elementary school facilities within the District." The MSBA agreed with Newton and recommended a design enrollment of 480. (The current enrollment was 419 when the analysis was done.) The MSBA said this would "provide some relief to enrollment pressures in the District, while remaining consistent with the District's goal to maintain neighborhood elementary schools."

The next step in the feasibility process is site selection. Using Angier as a model, the process will begin with developing criteria to use to select between site strategy alternatives. At Angier, the site strategy alternatives included: (1) a full renovation with no addition, (2) a full renovation plus required net addition, (3) a partial renovation, partial demolition and larger addition, (4) a full demolition and new construction at the existing site, (5) new construction at a remote site, and (6) new construction at an adjacent site. For Angier, there were quite a few criteria that were used to evaluate these alternatives. They ranged from cost to timing to meeting educational program to providing access to community used space and acknowledging historical features.